EDUCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENTS

The Magazine of Staff and Educational Development Association Ltd (SEDA)

SEDA
STAFF AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Issue 5.4
Dec. 2004 ISSN 1469-3267
£5 Cover price (UK only)

Contents

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Continuing Professional Development in Higher Education: what do academics do?

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Introduction

Continuing professional development is currently high on the agenda for UK Higher Education. Further to proposals put forward in the Government's 2003 White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education', a consultation process is currently underway to support "the development of professional standards for academic practice and continuing professional development (CPD) that will support teaching and learning in higher education (HE)." (Universities UK et al, 2004). At the same time, institutions funded by HEFCE are being required to develop their Human Resource and Teaching & Learning strategies to include provision for rewarding excellent teaching and supporting CPD. In addition to these policy developments at Governmental and institutional level, changes are underway with respect to UK-wide support for academic practice. In May 2004, the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE) joined forces with the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) and National Co-ordination Team (NCT) to form the basis of the new Higher Education Academy (http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/).

It is timely, therefore, to reflect on the nature of professional development in higher education and to acquire a better understanding of what academics currently do to develop their teaching practice. This understanding of current attitudes and behaviours with respect to CPD will then provide a good basis on which to build support for the imminent changes in policy.

This article outlines a small-scale research project, funded through a SEDA award, to look at the CPD activities of one discipline in UK HE: Earth Sciences. The results are summarised and collated with other similar research in order to develop some broad guidelines and recommendations for the future support of academic CPD.

What constitutes CPD in higher education?

For many higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK, CPD is synonymous with formal courses or events that provide some form of 'training'. Such training is often provided as CPD for external professions such as law, business and finance, medicine and so on. However, there is some evidence to suggest that although HEIs have a "tendency to regard formal courses as the most appropriate mode of teaching provision,…practitioners in general take a different view" (Becher, 1996, pg 54). Becher's research into the CPD activities undertaken by practitioners in medicine, pharmacy, law, accountancy, architecture and structural engineering indicated that professional learning takes many forms. He identified seven categories or modes of learning:

- Courses and conferences;
- Professional interactions;

EDUCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENTS
The Magazine of SEDA

Issue 5.4
2004

2004 (Vol.5)
Annual Subscription Rates

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- Networking;
- Consulting experts;
- Personal research;
- Learning by doing; and
- Learning by teaching.

and suggested that "a clear awareness of the large part played by other forms of interaction might perhaps encourage professional schools [in HEIs] to adjust their own priorities: for example in helping to set up professional interactions, to promote and underpin specialist networks and to support personal research."

As well as supporting the CPD of external practitioners, HEIs are of course also concerned with the development of their own staff and, in general, formal workshops and seminars again seem to be the dominant model. Interestingly, although many other forms of learning are recognised for initial HE lecturer training courses e.g. action learning sets, projects, peer observation, reflection, these seem to be much less of a feature of CPD provision. There is, of course, an important place for formal 'off-the-peg' activities but these should be considered as part of a broader spectrum of learning opportunities.

What do academics actually do to develop their teaching practice?
A small number of studies have been undertaken with mixed disciplinary groups of academic and other HE staff (e.g. Ferman, 2002; Dunne; LTSN Generic Centre, 2002; Luedekke, 2003) to ascertain the different activities undertaken to develop teaching practice. The aim of the small-scale research project reported here was to complement these studies by looking at the experiences within a large number of academics from a single discipline (Earth Science) across 31 different institutions in the UK, and to draw together some common concepts and conclusions.

Earth Science was chosen for the study as it is my own discipline in which I have established credibility as an educational developer. Although a well-established and 'traditional' discipline, the study of Earth Science involves many different learning environments that require innovative thinking in terms of supporting learning. The discipline is relatively small in terms of number of institutions and hence it was possible to target named academics through a search of departmental web-sites.

A short questionnaire was posted to 475 named academics. The questionnaire listed a variety of different possible CPD activities (see Table 1 below) and asked respondents to tick those they had done within the last 12 months. Respondents were also asked to state whether or not they had any formal obligations to undertake CPD for teaching, and to identify the main barriers to such professional development. Basic demographic data was also collected including gender and number of years teaching. 192 responses were received and general knowledge of the Earth Science community in the UK suggests that the gender and age profiles of the sample were a reasonable representation of the population.

Type of CPD Activity (in order of preference)	No. of Responses	
Discussions with colleagues in your department	180	(94%)
Supported colleagues to develop their teaching	88	(46%)
Networked with colleagues from other institutions	76	(40%)
Read books / articles on learning & teaching	72	(38%)
Read web-based information on learning & teaching	60	(31%)
Participated in a learning & teaching workshop	52	(27%)
Discussions with staff in your institutional EDU	47	(24%)
Attended a learning & teaching conference	21	(11%)
Applied for teaching development funding	17	(9%)
Undertook research into learning & teaching	11	(6%)
Member of Earth Science Teachers' Association or		
National Association of Geoscience Teachers	8	(4%)
Studied for / hold a L&T qualification (inc ILT)	31	(16%)

Table 1: Responses to CPD activities questionnaire

The distribution of the age groups (number of years teaching) was analysed for each activity using the X-squared test for independent samples. Only two of the activities showed a statistically significant difference between the age groups:

- L&T qualification: 5-10 and 21+ years significantly lower than expected than from random distribution ($p=0.003$)
- Participated in a workshop: 1-4 and 5-10 years significantly higher, 11-20 and 21+ years significantly lower than expected from a random distribution ($p=0.04$)

Respondents were also asked to note any other activity they had undertaken, these included responding to student feedback, reflecting on their experiences, peer review, external examining, achieving learning and teaching awards, looking at objects in other disciplines, and hosting a learning and teaching conference. In addition to enhancing teaching practice, 11 respondents indicated that their professional development for teaching was related to ensuring that the subject content of their courses was up-to-date.

The questionnaire asked respondents to select the main barriers to their undertaking CPD for teaching (table 2). Within each category, there was no significant difference between the spread of responses by age group than would be expected from a random distribution.

Barrier (in order of preference)	**No. of Responses**	
Time	161	(84%)
Emphasis on research	102	(53%)
Funding (e.g. to attend events)	41	(21%)
Lack of personal interest	23	(12%)
Lack of encouragement	23	(12%)
None	9	(5%)

Table 2: Barriers to Undertaking CPD for Teaching

For many academics, lack of time and pressures from other priorities (i.e. research) seem to be related to the culture of the department as exemplified by this comment from one respondent. "Academic promotion solely relies on one's international research reputation. Time spent on teaching and teaching-related activities (such as CPD) is applauded but it is weighted close to zero by promotion panels."

It can be inferred from additional comments provided by the respondents that the main other reason for not undertaking CPD was due to bad experiences of formal courses in the past (or perhaps personality clashes with educational developers and other colleagues!). It seemed that these respondents had such strong views (perhaps coloured by these bad experiences) that they assumed 'educationalists' define CPD as only about formal courses and events. For example, despite the fact that the questionnaire listed 'discussions with colleagues, networking and reading' as the first few possible CPD activities, the following types of comment were still made:

"As usual, the educationalist view is that CPD requires a course or equivalent teaching us how to teach."

"I value teaching quality very highly, and am constantly striving to do it better. I have just found the formal routes to CPD you emphasise here to be much less helpful than talking to others, emulating those I think are effective etc."

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they were formally required to undertake CPD (e.g. through membership of a professional body or by their institution). Respondents from 18 departments indicated that they were formally required by their institution to undertake CPD. However, there were several cases of discrepancies between individuals from the same institution as to whether CPD was required or not. Of these 18 institutions:

9 require new staff to take a formal course
8 have some form of internal or peer review
(2 have both of the above)
4 use peer observation
1 has CPD as school policy for both new staff and experienced staff.

Interestingly, there was virtually no reference to appraisal as a mechanism to support CPD, with only one person mentioning appraising colleagues as a means of professional development.

Summary and Conclusions / Implications

The results of this small-scale study suggest that, despite pressures of time and other priorities such as research, the vast majority of Earth Science academics do consider the development of their teaching practice to be important. Although only 16 out of the 192 respondents were members of the ILTHE (and, therefore, had formal requirements to 'remain in good standing') only 4 respondents out of the remaining 176 implied that they did not engage in any CPD for teaching. Additionally, the research indicated that professional development for teaching in higher education takes a large variety of forms including discussions with colleagues, responding to student feedback and peer review, as well as more formal activities such as qualifications, workshops and conferences. Such a variety is to be expected from a large sample of individuals in which there are likely to be several different learning styles.

These findings echo those by previous researchers who have undertaken more in-depth studies of smaller samples of mixed disciplinary groups of academics. For example, Ferman (2002) identified a wide range of collaborative and individual activities including working with an educational designer, attending workshops, discussions with peers, presenting at conferences, being mentored and undertaking professional reading. Such variation of activities is also recognised by those offering guidelines and recommendations for professional development in higher education. Baume (1999) suggests that "choosing or making the right developmental opportunities involves first knowing something about the way you prefer to learn about teaching." She then details a range of such opportunities including 'off-the-peg' courses and workshops, conferences, mentoring, action learning sets, reading, discussions with colleagues, learning by doing and reflection, and development through committees, working groups, professional work, job shadowing and exchange.

My research has led me to consider that there are two ways of looking at CPD. Firstly, it might be considered as an explicit part of professional practice, linked to the requirements of membership of a professional body, whereby practitioners are required to demonstrate that they have engaged in CPD in order to 'remain in good standing'. In my experience, this seems to be the default definition of CPD in most professions (including HE). Secondly, the concept of ongoing development or learning is part of all our working lives, whether or not we are formally required to evidence it. This latter perspective is one that lies behind much of the work of educational development in HE to date (including that of institutional units and national organisations such as the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres): opportunities for developing or learning are provided to all those who teach or support learning not just those who are members of a professional body.

Challenges

Higher Education in the UK has reached a pivotal time with respect to professional development. My research and my review of other's work in this area suggests four main challenges for HEIs:

- Ongoing development should be a key feature of all professional's work, not just those who are formally required to evidence it. With the introduction of professional standards for teaching in higher education the challenge for HEIs will be to ensure that their CPD support is fully inclusive and not just targeted at 'registered practitioners' who are required to 'remain in good standing'. This is linked to the need to develop a culture where CPD for teaching is valued and rewarded in the same way as CPD for research, and that ongoing professional learning is something that everyone should be engaged in (Johnston, 1998; Norris, 2003).

- Different people have different learning styles and evidence shows that academics learn about and develop their teaching in many different ways. The challenge for the Higher Education Academy as it develops a professional standards framework and for educational developers who are required to support it, is how to acknowledge, value, provide support for and enable the recording / monitoring of this multiplicity of formal and informal activities. As Sue Johnston (1998) noted in her overview of professional learning, "Formal courses and similar activities need to comprise part of an integrated and coherent program of professional learning undertaken by the academic and they need to take place in an environment in which such learning is expected and valued."

- As well as developing teaching practice, ensuring the subject content is up-to-date is also an important feature of CPD. In Earth Science, education sessions have been a feature of major international conferences for several years (including the Geological Society of America's annual conference and the quadrennial International Geological Congress) thus allowing participants to engage in professional development related to both their research (subject content) and teaching. The challenge for the Higher Education Academy's Subject Centres is to explore the synergies between professional development for teaching and for research.

- All the literature on professional development in higher education emphasises collaboration as a key component. Academics collaborate with their colleagues through curriculum development, peer review, formal and informal networking, research and so on. Collaboration may occur within a department, across different faculties and disciplines, between different institutions, regionally, nationally and internationally. Collaboration and communication should also be the key to the relationship between educational developers and academic staff (Wareing, 2004). This relationship is analogous to and as important as that between academics and their students (Cowan, 2001). Rather than using a transmission model of teaching, educational developers work with academic staff to support their curriculum and professional development - CPD should not be something that is 'done' to one group of HE staff by another. Perhaps part of the success of the Subject Centres is not just that they 'speak the same language' as the disciplinary communities but that they work with them to help them support themselves.

Recommendations: a possible framework for CPD

The above four 'challenges' are relevant to all those who support CPD in higher education, including institutional educational developers, national Subject Centres and professional bodies and associations. Recommendations for supporting CPD have also been made by other authors. Eraut (1994) suggested that support for professional development requires a suitable combination of learning environments; appropriate time and space; availability of both learning resources and people able to offer support; and the capacity of the professional to learn and to make the most of available development opportunities. Similarly, Johnston (1998) identified four ways of thinking about professional learning such that professional learning should be evidenced at all stages of every academic's career; professional learning should be related to institutional contexts, and supported by institutional structures and rewards; any programme of professional learning should be self-directed and related to the needs of the individual; and there need to be opportunities for collaboration.

To conclude, comparison of these two recommendations with the findings from the research reported here shows four common elements that might be highlighted in a framework for CPD in higher education:

1) Professional development for all elements of the academic role (including teaching and research) should be considered as a normal part of professional life for all academic staff and, as such, professional development for teaching should be part of institutional structures and reward policies in parity with that for research;
2) Professional development should be self-directed and

planned within the relevant context, and staff should be supported in enhancing their understanding of their own preferred learning styles and needs in order to make the most of available opportunities for developing their practice;

3) There should be recognition of and support for the complex nature of professional development which occurs in a variety of learning settings involving many different formal and informal activities;
4) The collaborative nature of professional development should be enhanced, allowing for and supporting interactions between academics within departments, between different disciplines, and across different institutions, and between all those who teach and support learning.

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Editorial

In this edition of *Educational Developments* Helen King from the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth and Earth Sciences at Plymouth reports on the study she has completed that was supported by a SEDA small grant. The focus is on CPD. Something that is likely to be of increased importance to us all. Following her examination of what comprises CPD and what colleagues in her study have reported in relation to successes and inhibitions, Helen makes a number of important conclusions and recommendations. Lack of time and lack of recognition feature strongly. (In supporting CPD and developing CPD systems further, it is useful to revisit the SEDA Professional Development Framework site at http://www.seda.ac.uk/professional_development.htm).

Within the context of emerging trends, Mantz Yorke and Peter Knight examine the increasingly strategic role that educational development has in higher education institutions. With a focus on employability the authors consider the consequences of this enhanced role in terms of the possibility that educational development is becoming more politicised and the tensions that can create.

Also in this edition Don Mackenzie and Dave O'Hare discuss recent trends in computer aided assessment. Using a developmental model they express some disappointment at the lack of what they would see as real widespread progress in the 'best' use of computer aided assessment but also offer hope by looking at how we might learn, for example, from outside higher education.

For those interested in how the Leadership Foundation is developing there is an article which includes an interview with the CEO, Ewart Wooldridge, and there is also a follow up piece to the 53 Interesting Ways in Which Colleagues Resist Change.

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Being strategic about employability

Mantz Yorke (The Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team and Liverpool John Moores University)
and
Peter Knight (The Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team and the Open University)

The emergence of a strategic role

Educational development has, in recent years, been given a strategic position in many institutions in the UK. In some it contributes to the development of institutional strategies that we see as being interlinked – learning, teaching and assessment; employability; e-learning; widening participation; and retention. In most it is expected to help faculties, schools and departments implement strategies in an educationally sound way. The shift of emphasis reflects the increasing extent to which higher education is being driven by governmental expectations.

Higher education in the UK is being pressed by governments to give greater attention to the development of student employability, and educational development units need to contribute to the institutional response. Educational development has, in respect of employability, therefore become more political, both institutionally and nationally, than it was in the past - and the point applies more generally to teaching, learning, assessment and the development of academics as professionals. Educational development, placed as it is between public policy and professional development, needs to develop ways of responding to national and institutional policy steers whilst remaining true to the enduring values of higher education.

There are serious issues here, which we illustrate with reference to a recent study of the Higher Education Academy's subject centres. They too are pulled between representing their communities and advancing government policy - and policies and practices are different in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. While some senior informants reckoned that the subject centres should promote national policies, others thought it would be fatal, as the following quotations show.

If they are receiving funds from HEA, which has a clear funding mandate, then I'd be very disappointed if there were any subject centres not involved in widening participation. [Senior funding council official]

We're very keen in the sense that all 24 [Subject Centres should] have some engagement with what we're doing. [Senior funding council official]

Some in the Philosophy community already think that the subject centre is an agent of government, for no

reason. [Senior member of Philosophy community]

This 'sets alarm bells ringing': how can discipline allegiance be combined with strategies and policy advice? [Senior educational developer]

Subject centres have to be seen to be working on behalf of people in universities, not QAA and professional bodies, who tend to be very reactionary [Pro vice-chancellor]

This politicisation of educational development means that educational developers need a broad appreciation of the political agendas that are being pursued and the expectations of various stakeholders, and to possess some skill in reconciling the demands of academics and policy agencies. They also need to possess an understanding of the extent to which the changes they are promoting, or are asked to promote, are political, technological (using the term, as Michael Fullan [2001] does, in the broad sense) and cultural. Further, they need to identify where there might be commonality of interest, and where interests might conflict. Hence there is a sense in which educational developers are looking for optimal solutions to the challenges facing them – optimal, in the sense that they will at times need to strike a balance between competing interests.

This article focuses on the way in which educational development units might operate in a more politicised context: it does not offer a reprise of various writings on employability since there is insufficient space and, in any case, there is a growing set of resources available on which to draw (see the bibliography below). The evolving context of higher education means that educational development units have begun a significant shift in role, from being providers of professional development opportunities for the willing to being instrumental in implementing institutional policies – especially in respect of learning and teaching, with employability being the particular topic of interest here.

More than skills

The promotion of 'skills' (with a variety of prefixes over the years) has met with limited acceptance by the higher education sector, which has seen them as being narrowly-conceived, somewhat arbitrary, and distinctly reductionist. Employability, taken by ESECT as

> a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy

has found a greater acceptance by academics because, amongst other things, it is based on theory and empirical findings, and it is seen as being aligned with good learning. It is suggestive, rather than prescriptive, and allows for the variation that exists between disciplinary areas. It therefore affirms, rather than opposes, the values espoused by academics.

Educational developers have always engaged with the theoretical and practical literature on learning, teaching and assessment. The contemporary focus on employability has widened the field of view to encompass theory and empirical findings from areas abutting education, such as psychology (though much of this material is of a broader relevance than to employability). Recent work by Bennett et al (2000), and by ESECT in conjunction with the Higher Education Academy, points towards avenues of inquiry that could be pursued to advantage.

Engaging with employability

The changed status of educational development in institutions is leading to changes in the way that educational developers work. If institutions are viewed as being banded into three broad hierarchical levels – senior management, departments, and individuals - then, across the sector, the shift of emphasis in the way in which educational development units work with groups is likely to be as shown below. The shifts have, however, probably taken place to different extents in different institutions.

Hierarchical level	Shift in emphasis of EDUs' work
Senior management	Increasing
Departments	Increasing
Individuals	Decreasing

Both senior managers and departments have responsibility for making sure that institutional policies are being implemented, and so educational developers have to play their part. This subtly changes their role-relationship with colleagues in academic departments and other support units. It also leaves less time for an approach based on individual voluntarism. An e-mail survey of educational developers conducted for the SEDA/ESECT workshop on employability that was held in Leicester on 17 February 2004 showed considerable variation in the extent to which educational development units were engaging with departments: the proportion of time devoted to work with departments was estimated as ranging from 5 to 70 per cent. A subsequent study of seven UK educational development units with strong national reputations found 20 per cent to be common. Though these data cannot be claimed to be representative, and in any case quantification is difficult, the findings suggest that some units have made quite substantial shifts in the manner in which they operate.

There is a variety of ways in which educational developers can work with colleagues, for example:

1. Following up the relevant literature in order to proffer grounded thoughts on how departments and their institution might respond to the challenges inherent in employability.
2. Using curriculum auditing to check for
   - aspects of employability that are missing;
   - duplications of provision;
   - discontinuities in provision; and
   - the overall curricular coherence.

3 'Tuning' aspects of learning, teaching and assessment within the validated curricular framework (see Knight and Yorke, 2004), in order to enhance opportunities for students to develop employability.

4 Engaging in significant curriculum development in order to enhance the pedagogic approach to employability, and to rethink assessment. To be blunt, this means focusing on programme-level development and coherence. The achievements that employers value cannot be handled at the edges of a single module here or in an extra-curricular session there. Nor can the appropriate assessment arrangements.

Wrapped up in all this are a number of important curricular issues, amongst them being:

- Working to develop learning situations through which students might have a greater opportunity to develop the range of personal qualities that are desired by employers (and that are valued more generally in the world).
- Allowing programmes to encourage and reward learning that may take longer than a single study unit (module) to develop.
- Making sure that work-based and work-related learning are valuable experiences, and that they are integrated into curricula.
- Considering what learning from part-time employment and voluntary activity might be accreditable.
- Designing formative assessment that contributes optimally to students' development of employability.

Another issue, but one that for practical purposes lies beyond the powers of individual institutions, is the way in which student achievements are indexed and recorded. Universities UK, SCOP and HEFCE have recently sponsored a study of how student achievement can most appropriately be 'measured' and recorded, partly in recognition of the growing belief that the honours degree classification does not adequately indicate the breadth of graduates' achievements. Giving greater emphasis to employability, however, has considerable implications for the way in which assessments are conducted and performances are indexed (Knight and Yorke, 2003). For example, it might require greater thinking about students' total assessment experience in their higher education careers and much less advocacy of 'new' assessment methods.

Variations on the theme

The enhancement of students' employability will have different emphases depending on the circumstances. Variables to be taken into account include:

- The character of subject disciplines.
- The type of curriculum. (A foundation degree programme differs from other programmes because of the emphasis on work-based learning, and vocational programmes differ from non-vocational programmes.)
- The mode of study. (Many part-time and distance learners are in employment and engage in higher education because they wish to enhance their capabilities with career development in mind.)
- The nature of the students. (Mature students with work and life experience will probably need to develop different capabilities than will school leavers, and employability for the former might particularly be construed and presented in terms of further development.)
- The mix of teachers. (It is often the case that much teaching at level 1 is done by part-time staff. This could have an adverse effect on the development of students' employability.)
- The institution in which the programme runs. (For example, a collaborating FE college compared with its higher education institution partner.)

Clearly, as regards the development of curricula to emphasise employability, one size will not fit all. SEDA is in a position to help educational developers to respond shrewdly to the evolving higher education landscape.

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Both are members of the ESECT Network in partnership with The Higher Education Academy.

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Talkin' 'bout my generation - advances in computer based assessment

Dave O'Hare & Don Mackenzie, Centre for Interactive Assessment Development, University of Derby

The growth of CBA in HE

There continues to be a significant growth in the use of computer-based assessment (CBA) in HE over the past 15 years. A number of recent surveys into the use of CBA have shown growth in its use across a range of disciplines. For example, Stephens and Mascia (1997) showed that 67% of respondents to their survey were using the more broadly defined computer aided assessment (CAA) in some form. They concluded that the use of CAA in UK HE was growing, and that this delivery method would 'prevail'. Such growth has also been reflected in more recent surveys (Bull & Hesketh, 2001) and will no doubt be captured by the current survey into CAA (CAA survey, 2004). This, coupled with assertions of the increasing importance of computerised assessment in the literature (for example, Brown *et al.*, 1999, p. 1) and the increasing use of computers for personal and professional purposes in that era (Bennett, 2001, p. 3), has led some to describe the increased use of computers in the assessment process as 'inexorable' (Bennett, 2002).

A number of factors have been behind the growth in the use of CBA in HE. These relate to growth in student numbers in HE, and the growth in available CBA resources. For over 20 years CBA has been provided as a teaching resource by many textbook publishers, indeed one of the first applications of CBA was in self-test exercises made available by such publishers. Software such as 'QuestionMark' has been available for use on PCs since the late 80s and for the web since the mid 90s. This package alone is in use in over 20 HE institutions in the UK. The growth of computerised assessment will also have been aided by the use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) in HE, as these often have simple CBA. Jenkins *et al.* (2001) conducted a survey of VLE usage (covering around 70 institutions) and observed that 80 per cent of respondents said that VLEs were being used in their institutions.

Stairway to heaven?

Whilst to many this growth may be considered pleasing (perhaps mainly university managers), it is perhaps worth pausing to consider where HE has travelled to in using the technology to benefit the assessment (and thus the learning) process. One of the most significant commentators in the role of CBA in the future of education is Randy Bennett, who has predicted that CBA will allow assessment to be "re-invented" (Bennett, 1998). He describes possible generations of CBA:

1st Generation "automate an existing process without reconceptualising it" e.g. multiple choice examinations
2nd Generation Use multimedia technology to assess skills in ways that were not previously possible e.g. simple simulations. Assessing new constructs
Generation 'R' R for re-invention - assessment will become indivisible from instruction, with high stakes decisions being made on many assessments.

It is disappointing to note that despite the growth in CBA the majority of it is still very much at Bennett's '1st Generation' stage, being mainly focused on the use of multiple choice items.

There are some exceptions to the adoption of this approach to CBA in HE. The TRIADS (Mackenzie & Wilkins, 1995, Mackenzie, 2000, Mackenzie et al, 2004) and SCHOLAR (Ashton & Beevers, 2002) projects offer two such examples. Both have developed systems that offer a high degree of flexibility, can incorporate multimedia and simulations to facilitate performance based measurement. Thus, such assessments begin to meet Bennett's 2nd Generation of CBA in that the use of multimedia allows new skills/ constructs to be assessed. Such approaches offer great benefit by enabling the production of assessments that are more closely aligned with the real life application of the learning materials. In other words, they provide more authentic measures of ability (Huff & Sireci, 2001.

Generation next?

The use of these systems is, however, the exception rather than the rule. Why is this?

There are a number of contributory factors. The TRIAD System for example offered '2nd Generation' CBA capabilities as early as 1995 (Mackenzie & Wilkins, 1995) but it was borne out of the multi-media courseware 'stable' that went out of fashion with the rush to develop static, low-interactivity resources for the Web in the mid-1990s. Indeed it could be argued that the focus on Web delivery, despite its usefulness as a data repository, set back the development of e-learning and more advanced CBA by nearly ten years. Web delivery is not necessary or even desirable for medium and high stakes assessments within an institution although it has been widely seen as the 'holy grail' for CBA systems.

The advent of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) has further compounded the problem. Whilst these have been instrumental in allowing the more rapid provision of, mainly, static learning materials, many provide only simple question types

suitable for formative, quiz-type applications. Furthermore the learning and assessment resources often reside in separate areas of the system. This hampers the development of more advanced CBA since monitored assessment cannot be seamlessly embedded within the learning materials even if more sophisticated question tools were available within the VLE. Some might consider this separation of assessment from learning as a case of the technology driving the pedagogy! Thus, technology can become a limiting rather than an enabling factor in CBA evolution.

Whilst the technical standards for CBA such as the IMS-QTI (Question and Test Interoperability) (IMS, 2004) have admirable aims, their introduction has also had the unfortunate consequence of becoming a limiting factor in the development of tests beyond the first generation described by Bennett (see Booth, 2004 for discussion).

Another possible explanation for the general lack of progress in applying technology to assessment might lie in the fact that in the UK there exist separate e-learning, e-assessment and e-technical development communities, making the production of Generation 'R' assessments that are seamlessly aligned with the learning materials a challenge.

Generation 'R' assessments that involve the use of simulations and scenarios can be expensive to produce and may require expert programmers. These need to be justified by large cohorts, a long shelf life or some other critical driver in order to be economic. It is to be hoped that the rather limited uptake of distance e-learning courses to date (illustrated by the demise of UKEU) does not lead to a diminution of effort in this area. In an environment where many courses are market led and sometimes ephemeral, some strategic funding decisions are thus required.

The promise of enhanced educational quality should be a significant factor in promoting Generation 'R' assessments but it requires a substantial investment to enhance the skill sets of academic tutors, the availability of technical support teams with pedagogic training and more generous funding for course development than is currently the case.

Tiny steps

However, one might at least draw some small comfort from the fact that although we have only travelled a small distance down the line in applying technology to assessment, perhaps due to the conservative nature of HE, we have at least produced '1st Generation' CBA that is of uniform quality across the sector. Unfortunately the introduction of multiple choice type items on such a scale is not without a number of significant issues, in terms of the production of items (Boyle et al., 2002), the validity and fairness of such tests (Ben- Shakar & Sinai, 1991) and their applicability to measure higher order skills (Cox, 1976, Johnstone & Ambusaisi, 2000).

Waiting for the great leap forward?

Whilst the growth of CBA seems to many in HE to be inexorable, some have been alarmed at the apparent lack of an accompanying growth in staff development and training in CBA (and assessment generally). Many authors have already noted the need for changes in existing assessment practices in HE (e.g. Race, 1993). Such changes include not only the development of staff involved in assessment (Yorke *et al.*, 2000), but also the management of the assessment process itself (Yorke, 1998). Thus, there was already a clear need for improvement in the conduct of assessment in HE even prior to the introduction of novel methods such as CBA. One can only speculate on the possible consequences of the introduction of high stakes summative CBA in such an environment. Boyle and O'Hare (2003) noted the particular lack of QA procedures for CBA in HE compared with comparable high stakes tests in other education sectors. Not least among the QA challenges is the issue of staff training. Several authors have noted that the development of high-quality multiple-choice items was a difficult skill to acquire (e.g. Boyle *et al.*, 2002, p. 279). One might also contend that the development of 'objective' question styles is a professional skill different to teaching or conducting research. It is therefore essential that where CBA is practised it is accompanied by training. McKenna and Bull (2000) note that academics designing tests for the first time will require 'support'. However, the majority of publications covering implementation of CBA still regard staff training as voluntary and optional. Perhaps such an approach is worryingly minimal – indeed in a recent paper on quality assurance in CBA Boyle & O'Hare (2003) state:

"Given the impact of university examinations on students' future careers, mandatory training and certification of staff involved in CAA production may be required."

This is clearly an interesting suggestion and may reap a number of benefits if implemented, not least in the effects on other modes of assessment (Bunderson *et al.,* 1998).

Some institutions have developed their own training programmes, e.g. University of Dundee (Walker et al., 2004), and the Scottish Qualifications Authority is currently developing an Advanced Certificate in E-assessment. A national qualification such as this would be of great value in ensuring homogeneity of standards. One would also hope that the newly formed HE academy would wish to take a firm interest in these developments. However, the discussion of the requirement for mandatory certification of staff involved in CBA remains to take place.

One might also wish to take this opportunity to note that despite the huge growth in the use of CBA in HE there is currently little in the way of

support materials for staff in HE in the development and implementation of CBA (apart from the CAA conference and ex CAA centre). Since the demise of the CAA centre there is no point of contact where details of current good practice, case studies in CBA and practice in other sectors of education can be accessed. Such a deficiency will clearly need to be addressed.

At the other end of the telescope - CBA in other education sectors However, despite this apparent lack of progression in HE (which is perhaps understandable given the above factors) there has been a real growth in the use of what may be termed advanced computer based assessment and the use of more 'authentic' assessments such as performance assessments in other sectors. Such tests have taken a real leap forward in the arena of professional examinations e.g. those required for licensure. The US National board of medical examiners (NBME) have recently adopted a system known as 'primum', which is a complex multidimensional simulation of a doctors' medical decision making which is now used as part of the statutory licensing process for medics in the US (Melnick, 2002). Other professional organisations have not been slow to capitalise on the authentic assessments that ACBA can allow – for example the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants AICPA in April 2004 introduced a complex simulation exercise of a real accounting problem into their licensure examination, which tests process and skills related to accounting practice rather than the 'nuggets of knowledge tested in MCQs (Drasgow, 2004). As one commentator noted –

"…when you interview an accountant, you want to know that they can do the job – not answer multiple choice questions about it!"

A common criticism of multiple-choice items is that in the real world people don't answer them… they perform tasks. Thus it is entirely proper that the assessments produced should replicate these tasks in some way. The area of professional testing, at least, appears to be embracing this approach.

However, there are some potential problems in this drive to Generation 'R' type tests that must be considered. One potential drawback in the use of advanced computer based assessment, is that the approaches to assessment are so new that we do not have at present the underlying measurement theory to support such assessments. What have been comparatively simple matters to academics in HE such as marking schemes take on a whole new complexity when applied to performance measurement. Whilst approaches such as the use of Bayesian estimation (Bennett, 2004) offer a means of allowing inferences of ability to be made based on the users actions, such complex mechanisms may be inappropriate for the 'cottage industry' approach to CBA present in many institutions. In addition there may well be issues of test fairness caused by differential advantage to particular groups as a result of the use of such novel methods of assessment – this will have to be investigated and the effects quantified.

Despite these many issues with CBA is must be noted that this is a very exciting time for all those involved in assessment in HE and one only hopes that we can grasp the challenge laid before us and truly harness the power of the technology to allow assessment to be re-invented and produce more authentic assessments which provide real benefits to the learners.

Conclusions

The growth in the use of CBA in HE has led to a number of interesting challenges; among these are the shift to new models of assessment, staff training and appropriate use of assessment methods. We welcome such challenges, as they raise assessment issues rightly to the forefront of teaching and learning in HE.

The authors would welcome discussion of the issues raised in this paper in the wider academic community.

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Tip Sites for Learning and Teaching

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Small Group Learning

Another trek around parts of the World! Again we have been reliant on Google (http://www.google.com) for our searches and any omissions of sites are our fault and please do let us know of any more - these can be added to the online version of this article.
On to the topic in hand….

There is much research evidence that indicates that regardless of the subject matter, students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other institutional formats. Small group work can promote development of a range of key skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem solving and learner collaboration. However, good learning experiences in small groups do not just happen by virtue of students being asked to work in small groups. Collaborative and co-operative learning in small groups will only occur if those facilitating small group learning understand the complexities of working in groups and plan such activities very carefully.
The following websites are recommended on the basis of the thoughtful and scholarly approach of the authors regarding the planning, implementation and monitoring of small group work as used to support and enhance student learning.

From Australia

The University of New England Teaching and Learning Centre Introduction to University Teaching Series: http://www.une.edu.au/tlc/pub/smgroups.pdf

An excellent article from Izabel Soliman. The article entitled Teaching Small Groups manages an excellent balance between providing the underpinning pedagogical theory relating to group development, strategies for facilitating small group work and advice on managing small group teaching.
The article begins by defining the types of small group work being referred to, namely seminars, workshops and laboratory sessions. There is an extremely helpful section on potential difficulties and possible solutions. The potential problems are ones which we can all recognise: the whole group is silent and unresponsive; one or two students dominate the discussion; group members don't listen to each other or build on previous contributions, etc. Many of us would want to have this article by our side as we deal with these common situations. Soliman provides a very interesting section on assessing student participation in tutorials and discussions which could be very helpful in a number of different learning situations. Interestingly she also provides an assessment checklist for the reader as facilitator. The only slight criticism readers / users may have of this article is that the references might seem slightly dated – but the references which are provided include some of the classic research on learning and teaching.
In a very sensitive and accessible manner the author highlights the skills required of the facilitator in these situations matched by some of the common errors we can all make in trying to prompt student participation.

From the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, the University of Melbourne: http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/APFYP/pdfs/smallgps.pdf

Marcia Devlin provides a very easily downloadable booklet on Teaching Small Groups which in fact, as she acknowledges has been adapted from Ernie Barrington's Manual 'Hot Tips for Tutors' which is regularly updated and published by the Centre for Professional Development at the University of Auckland. This booklet starts off with a short reflective exercise for the small group work facilitator, just sufficient to remind one that good planning is essential, and ends with a reflective exercise. If as educational developers, we want to support the concept of the 'reflective practitioner', this is a very good practice indeed built into a learning resource.
While this booklet covers some of the same territory as the previously reviewed resource, there are some additional features which are worth a mention. There is an interesting section on teaching for inclusion and recognising diversity in our student population and there is also a very helpful section on setting ground rules or as one might prefer to say - 'expectations' of how the small group session will run. Often we have a tendency to think about ground rules but not actually set them. While the ideas put forward here are very good, there is also the suggestion that the ground rules / expectations should be set by the group itself. There are lots of good ideas about getting students involved, dealing with difficulties and evaluating your small group work sessions. This material is also very accessible and user friendly and could be used as a stand alone resource for new staff or as a development resource in, for example, a postgraduate certificate programme on learning and teaching.

From the USA

An excellent site for up-to-date newsletters on learning and teaching issues is from Stanford University http://ctl.stanford.edu/teach/speak/co-operative.pdf

The newsletter is entitled 'Speaking of Teaching' which is produced quarterly by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
The Newsletter on Co-operative Learning: Students Working in Small Groups would be an excellent resource for educational development purposes. Only 4 pages long

this paper covers in a very scholarly way the issues of : Assigning Group Tasks that Promote Learning, Teaching Students to Work in Groups, Forming and Guiding Groups, Evaluating Group Work and Experimenting to Learn. There is excellent advice in this paper: 'don't think of group work as something added on to an existing course structure but rather something that helps shape the course and helps synthesize specific course objectives'; 'What are the characteristic features of a good problem suitable for students working collaboratively?'; recognizing that you may need to teach students how to work in a group – do not assume it happens naturally. This Newsletter is one of these little finds that makes one glad to take on tasks like this review of web sites!!

Please note that it may be necessary to access this by means of going through Google, typing in Stanford University, Small Group Teaching. One of the little quirks of technology!

From Canada via the UK!

A Guide to Maximizing Learning in Small Groups
Igor Kusyszyn, Ph.D., York University, Toronto
http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/landt/docs/small-gr.html

Whilst this site is old - written in 1976 – it is remarkably to the point, refreshing, pragmatic and fearless in drawing one back to basics. Although originating from an author based in Toronto it can be found on a number of UK websites, but not in Canada (so far!)

Short, sweet and split into two sections for easy digestion we have:

A. Fundamentals and
B. Some Foundations and Other Considerations.

Under A. simple, but essential observations are made about the need for eye contact and room layouts to maximise this, and getting to know students' names. In the busy world of teaching, and more (and more) administration, finding the time to do this is difficult, but almost always worth the rewards. Whilst in B. some insight is offered more deeply into the author through a thought provoking list of quotations with his own commentary. This is a worthy read for either the old lag or the fledgling newcomer.

From the UK

The Teaching Toolkit at the University of Central Lancashire
http://www.uclan.ac.uk/ldu/resources/toolkit/

This is a resource to support a Post-Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning. What is offered here is a taster of a wider set of materials available. Small Group Options can be located at: http://www.uclan.ac.uk/ldu/resources/toolkit/sm_groups/index.htm

Small Group Options offers a mix of the practical and theoretical. The site begins with practical advice for the Role of the Facilitator in Encouraging Group Discussion. This is an adaptation of a piece by Barbara Helling in The Journal of Staff, Program and Organisational Development Vol. 6, No. 4, 1988 entitled "Looking for good teaching: a guide to peer observation".

It then continues with a series of excerpts from other works of a practical bent, all very useful and from known specialists: Habeshaws, Gibbs, Walklin, and Legge. Save to say that tips are available.

The penultimate section focuses on Assessment with a piece by Healey considering the assessment of group work, a potential development and means of assessing small group learning.

With the end in sight there is a full extract of a UCoSDA briefing paper by Nicol entitled "Research on Learning and Higher Education Teaching" offering a way in to detailed literature and this is followed by a focused bibliography on teaching small groups. Overall a site that allows you to remain as shallow or swim as deep as you wish, and no matter which, find a benefit from visiting this resource pool.

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The Leadership Foundation - Six months on

Steve Outram, The Higher Education Academy

''In a global economy, nothing is going to matter more than ideas, inventions, initiatives, insight. So building world-class universities is not just the educational challenge of our time - it is the economic challenge of our time''.

Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown - at the launch of the Leadership Foundation - 24th March 2004.

The Leadership Foundation (LF) was created in late 2003 and was formally launched in March 2004. Awarded £10M from the UK's four funding bodies for Higher Education it has a mission *to draw on the best existing programmes and commission new material in order to offer world-class development in leadership, governance and management to current and future leaders within higher education institutions*.

What does this mean for educational developers?

Firstly, there is anecdotal evidence that a number of educational development departments and units have been realigned with staff development activities around leadership and management development and this may well have the effect of changing colleagues' perceptions of what educational development is all about.

Secondly, there is an obvious shared concern with the development of greater leadership effectiveness and new leadership skills. In particular, there is a clear potential for creating shared 'developing the developer' programmes as both the inculcation of leadership skills and educational development become dispersed activities.

Thirdly, there are also clear opportunities for shared dissemination and evaluation activities – especially since Ewart Wooldridge, the Chief Executive, is alert to different models of evaluation and dissemination, such as appreciative inquiry.

Above all, the development and implementation of new and different leadership dimensions has the potential for significantly affecting the educational development role within a higher education institution.

The Academic Career

In a recent interview with Professor Bob Thackwray, the LF Director for Publications & Membership, and James Wisdom, SEDA Co-Chair, Ewart Wooldridge affirmed that he regarded a concern for leadership and management, not simply as the preserve of the senior staff of an institution, but as qualities which ran through (or should run through) the academic career as much as any other. He thought there was a lot of work to be done on understanding the academic career, and what were the expectations and promises which were part of the relationship between an academic and their institution.

Academics go into this career completely committed to their subject, their discipline, their research and their teaching, and they have positive expectations of their universities (as do their universities of them). Then they find they have to balance their research against their teaching (or vice versa) and the expectation grows that they will become managers and leaders - perhaps academic leaders, perhaps institutional leaders - and they have to balance these new challenges with their academic careers.

So one of Ewart Wooldridge's interests is how the implied contract and the reciprocal expectations are managed in times of change, to meet an academic's personal and professional aspirations as against the institution's legitimate requirements of their staff.

What is the Leadership Foundation doing?

At the European Foundation for Quality Management annual conference in June 2004 he outlined the Foundation's core activities to include

- Developing individuals
- Building leadership, governance and management capacity in Higher Education Institutions.
- Networking with stakeholders
- Promoting equality and diversity within higher education leadership, governance and management
- Being a champion and partner in promoting leadership, governance and management
- Being innovative through research and development
- Designing, commissioning and delivering appropriate programmes

These activities will be achieved through a framework of work programmes. For example, individual leaders (including governors) will be developed through open programmes, coaching and mentoring, through the inculcation of key skills and so on. Institutional capacity building will be achieved through customised programmes, benchmarking and through undertaking needs analyses. Further activities include the creation of practice networks, working with specific groups, creating a 'Futures Lab' and championing leadership through conferences and seminars.

Core Leadership Behaviours

At the EFQM conference he identified the core leadership behaviours that he saw the Leadership Foundation pursuing. These include being proactive in developing leadership qualities through communicating the LF vision, and achieving a focus through modelling the Foundations' values. Through engagement with HEIs and individuals and through motivating, empowering and supporting leadership, the Foundation intends to be pivotal as a change agent.

This agenda is supported by recent research into effective public sector leadership. Notably, Professor Sue Richards at the University of Birmingham's Institute of Local Government Studies has identified the characteristics of effective public sector leaders. A good public sector leader is able to connect the organisation's strategic vision with day-to-day operations. They will support staff through change and are good project managers. They recognise the importance of professional development and will invest in it and they are empathic individuals who are able to understand the 'what's in it for me' attitude of staff.

Developing different leadership dimensions

Not only does the LF intend to promote these leadership qualities, it also intends to engage with different leadership dimensions. We may all be familiar (too familiar perhaps) with hierarchical leadership. There are other leadership dimensions that the LF would wish to explore and encourage. Leadership may be transformational where the role of the leader is to enthuse and inspire others.

Following the work of Robert Greenleaf, the leadership dimension may be that of a 'servant-leader', defined in *The Servant as Leader* as follows:

It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant--first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.

The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived?

A further leadership dimension is 'distributed leadership'. Distributed leadership views all faculty staff as experts in their own right and everyone has a responsibility and is accountable for leadership in their own area. Distributed leadership is not about delegation but about inclusion. In this dimension, not everyone is a decision-taker but everyone can participate in the decision-making process. This is linked to a further leadership dimension, that of diversity leadership. Diversity leadership has an explicit goal of promoting the recruitment, retention and career development of a truly diverse workforce.

The need for improvement

It is clear that the Foundation sees the concept of higher education leadership as problematical and is keen to draw on research such as that undertaken by the Chartered Management Institute in 2003. 'Leading Change in the Public Sector: Making the Difference', examined current leadership performance based on the views of 1,900 public sector managers as they faced the daily pressures of the public reform agenda. The middle and junior managers in the survey were unimpressed by the skills of their leaders with only one third rating the leadership demonstrated by their most senior management team highly, with two thirds reporting either low or medium quality leadership. (It would be interesting to discover how a similar survey of managers in UK higher education institutions would compare.)

Top of the list for improvements - wanted by two thirds of managers - was 'clarity of vision', yet only one third claim that they saw it demonstrated in reality. Integrity, sound judgement and effective relations with politicians and external partners also featured highly as areas of concern. The survey respondents also showed concern about 'blame cultures' and a focus on targets, standards and procedures at the expense of imaginative leadership and management. As one panel member explained: "we're not going to get better just by getting better at measuring performance." Initiative overload was also cited as a barrier to effective leadership. Leaders were perceived to fail particularly in relation to their communication skills; their ability to engage their staff with their vision; and their ability to create enabling cultures in their organisations.

Informed by research such as this the LF has identified a number of flagship projects. These include

- Master-classes and seminars for senior leaders
- High level skills events
- Preparing for leadership programmes
- Governor development and the creation of a governance website
- The introduction of new HE mentoring schemes
- The establishment of a major leadership conference
- The development of diversity-leadership programmes
- Publications
- Developing a Fellowship Scheme to support change
- Establishing an international leadership network

The new organisation has come a long way in six months. A small grants scheme has been established. Workshop programmes entitled 'The Leadership Series' and 'High Level Skills for Leaders in Higher Education' have begun. In relation to

publications, following two sample editions published in September and October, **In Practice** will focus on staff and organisational development issues with subsequent editions forming the pull-out supplement to a quarterly magazine - **Engage.** The Foundation has also introduced schemes to create LF Associates, to attract colleagues to support the Governor Development Programme and to engage colleagues in research and consultancy. Finally, Ewart Wooldridge has made it clear that he and the Foundation are developing its strategy as an iterative process and that he welcomed advice, comment and contributions on its direction from SEDA members. Electronic versions of the first Annual Report, **Engage** and **In Practice** can be found at www.leadership-he.com.

1 Cited at http://www.greenleaf.org/leadership/read-about-it/articles/Quest-for-Caring-Leadership.html last accessed 5th October 2004

Steve Outram is a Senior Adviser at The Higher Education Academy.

What can we do to help academics start using e-learning?

Martin Oliver, Institute of Education

Historically, the Joint Information Systems Committee has been concerned with collections and connections – providing the technical infrastructure that allows UK institutions to use the internet, access electronic resources and so on. However, over the last few years its remit has steadily expanded to include support for the use of these facilities within teaching. Last year, a new programme was launched, the e-learning Programme. It will run until August 2007, to identify how e-learning approaches might be used to facilitate learning and to advise on how these approaches might be effectively implemented.

There are several activities operating under this programme. Some are concerned with tools and frameworks, others with the implementation of pilot services. Under the 'pedagogy and e-learning' strand, work commenced with three linked activities: a study of e-learning models, the 'practitioner study' and case studies of e-learning practice. These were intended to complement each other. The models study explored the research literature, looking particularly at whether theories of learning had implications for e-learning practice. This also led to the creation of a framework for assessing the appropriateness of particular uses of technology. The case studies took this framework (amongst other things) and used it to describe instances of practice that can be shared with others as a development resource. (These have since been compiled as a book and accompanying CD of video clips, which can be obtained from the JISC.)

The 'practitioner study' fits alongside these two pieces of work but has proved fairly complex to pin down. It started off as an investigation of the tools, resources and services that practitioners use - however, from the initial contract negotiations onwards, it became increasingly clear that what was wanted was something more active than just a review. What the JISC wanted to find out was the effect that these things had upon people's practice; they didn't simply want something descriptive, but something that would help them plan the remaining work under this programme in a way that should lead to the greatest possible impact. Before long, these various things we were expected to review were being re-conceived as 'interventions', and the stated aim of the project became the exploration of 'moving practice on'. In other words, this was no longer a review of tools used in e-learning, but of academic development.

The project involved a diverse team of people - myself as project leader, with work shared between Stephen Bostock, Grainne Conole, Tom Franklin, Allison Littlejohn, Patrick McAndrew, Lou McGill, Rhona Sharpe, Janice Smith and I. Rhona provided an initial positioning paper, highlighting various issues that influenced the success of different interventions. These were then taken up and used to analyse four detailed reviews: one of tools for e-learning, one of resources used by practitioners, one of national service s and one of institutional services. Each of these drew conclusions about the kinds of intervention that appeared to have the greatest impact on practice – conclusions that Rhona then went on to synthesise. This synthesis resulted in the development of a 'typology': a table that supports the analysis (or planning) of interventions in a way that highlights the qualities that, we believed, make a difference.

Five qualities made it into the final version of the typology:

- Usability (being known about, being accessing and being understandable by a tightly defined audience).
- Contextualisation (being customised or adapted for a particular audience, including recognition of the issues, values and practices of that group). This incorporated a related quality of adaptability: the idea that a

community can adapt 'generic' resources for their own use.

- Professional learning (the idea that changing practice requires learning, usually involving changed conceptions of teaching and learning – something we viewed from a constructivist perspective).
- Communities (seen as central to the above qualities – importantly, however, the emphasis is on working with *existing* communities rather than trying to create new social structures).
- Learning design (helping practitioners to base their practice on an understanding of student learning, designing to support this).

As well as these rows, the table also had three columns, referring to the 'levels' at which such qualities could be present:

- Representing and sharing knowledge.
- Developing staff.
- Developing organisations.

Although these were research-based, we were struck by how familiar each seemed. This is the wonder of hindsight: that what was initially obscure appears to be little more than common sense. However, the final phase of the project (which involved asking others to use this typology) showed that this was not transparent, simple or guaranteed to help. The people we sought to work with found it hard to adopt – which was unfortunate, but in many ways confirmed the qualities we had identified. For this particular study, we had not made the typology easily understandable, for example by adapting the language used (contravening the 'usability' quality), we had not contextualised it (it was designed for our use, not theirs, but was just given to them as was), we asked them to use it not to learn how to use it and we were vague about who 'practitioners' were (in fairness, this reflects an ongoing concern for this whole programme; we also tried to narrow down to 'developers' but, clearly, even this role was far from homogenous). We did at least try to explain that this should be used to think about how the users of their outputs (in this case, teaching staff using electronic resources) could be helped to do their job – an attempt to get the designers to design for learning.

Clearly, this was an unsatisfactory point at which to leave the work. The project ended with a series of recommendations to the JISC, one of which concerns the future use of the typology. The study we undertook led to a lot of learning on our part; what we are now recommending is that members of the project team work with clearly identified communities – such as groups of staff developers – to help them re-work the typology to suit their own needs and practices. In turn, they can then cascade this work further by working with others, if they found it useful. Members of the project team have already begun this process – through the recent joint SEDA and Association for Learning Technology workshop, for example. Ironically, what we didn't recommend is doing exactly what I'm doing here: promotional texts encouraging people to adopt the tool 'as is'. If you are interested, we'd encourage you to talk to members of the project team about working together to modify it – or alternatively, just to get on with changing it yourselves until it becomes something you think you can work with.

Web links

The JISC e-learning and pedagogy programme home page: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=elearning_pedagogy

The home page for the practitioners project, including all reports mentioned in this article: http://www.cetis.ac.uk:8080/pedagogy/ (Note: you will need to create a free ID to access this site.)

Information for Contributors

The Editorial Committee of Educational Developments welcomes contributions on any aspect of staff and educational development likely to be of interest to readers.

Submission of an article to Educational Developments implies that it has not been published elsewhere and that it is not currently being considered by any other publisher or editor.

For more information please contact the SEDA office on: 0121 415 6801 or via email: office@seda.ac.uk

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Research Committee News - SEDA Awards 2004

At the meeting of the Research Committee on 3 November we reviewed this year's bids for SEDA Awards. Using the same theme as the November conference – Questioning the Impact of Staff and Educational Development – we received 12 bids and were faced with some difficult decisions as we have a limited sum to award. In the end we made seven awards, five at £500 and two at £250, which were announced at the conference dinner in Birmingham.

The awards were made to:

Fiona Campbell, Napier University: *Investigate the use of the student voice to enhance staff development*.

Fiona's project will analyse the use of the student voice as an effective mechanism for enhancing the impact of staff development in learning, teaching and assessment. The outcome will be to highlight best practice and provide guidelines and case studies which show how it can be best employed in other institutions. The study will be mainly carried out using focus groups and interviews with practitioners both face-to-face and through the use of emails to include international contributions.

Helen Johnson, Roehampton University: *The role of the educational development centre in the design and implementation of a professional doctorate*.

The growth and development of professional doctorates, including the EdD, has involved new groups of staff in their delivery and support.

This study will carry out a literature review, focusing on the learning and teaching strategies used that do, or do not, differentiate the EdD from the conventional PhD and the role of educational development centres in the choice of such strategies.

Lynn Roberts, University of Liverpool: *Institutional learning and teaching conferences – rationale and impact*.

This project builds on an earlier survey of institutional learning and teaching conferences as the basis for decisions about future conferences at the University of Liverpool. The findings will be reviewed and followed up with further discussions where necessary before disseminating 'what works' more widely.

Rhona Sharpe FSEDA, Oxford Brookes University: *Evaluating the impact of informal professional learning situations*.

Rhona's proposal aims to investigate a range of informal professional learning situations and to improve understanding of why such approaches are used and how they are experienced by participants. Situations already in operation at Oxford Brookes University include special interest (reading) groups, critical friends in workshops as an alternative to the whole group plenary, and weblogs giving participants direct access to the thinking and decision making processes of experts. Other examples from different institutions will also be part of the study.

Nancy Turner, Royal Holloway, University of London: *Disciplinary approaches to postgraduate level teaching skills certificate programmes*.

This project aims to examine whether learning theory is interpreted differently by participants from different disciplines on Royal Holloway's PG Certificate in Skills of Teaching to Inspire Learning (inSTIL). It will also consider whether generic discussions prove a barrier to making the link with practice for some discipline groups and whether discussion about disciplinary approaches helps develop understanding within respective disciplines.

Shân Wareing FSEDA, Royal Holloway, University of London: *Are there discipline-specific models of student learning?*

Just as arguments are made for a discipline-specific approach to initial professional development of teachers in higher education, so this proposal examines subject-specific provision of ongoing professional development. The intention is to attempt a better understanding of the underpinnings of the arguments for and against disciplinary, as distinct from generic, professional development activities with particular reference to the extent to which there are discipline-specific models of student learning and where the main differences lie between them.

Gina Wisker FSEDA, Anglia Polytechnic University: *Building and evaluating the impact of fellowship*.

Gina's proposal seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of Learning and Teaching Fellowships and research groups focusing on learning and teaching. These educational development practices are seen as being innovative, collegial and scholarly and the study will focus on how individuals evaluate their own effectiveness and how others within the institution perceive the changes made to learning and teaching practice.

Congratulations to all those to whom we have made awards and I hope the others will have another go next year. Further details of the projects will appear in subsequent editions of Educational Developments as part of their dissemination activities. My apologies if I have misrepresented any of them here.

SEDA/Association of Learning Technology joint event

Martin Oliver, Institute of Education, led a workshop on 'Changing practice to introduce e-learning' on Wednesday 3 November. Attended by about 30 participants, Martin drew on the outcomes of a recently-completed JISC project. As well as hearing about the outcomes of the project, participants were able to work with a typology to analyse interventions to encourage the adoption of e-learning. Though I had to leave early, feedback from my two colleagues who also attended was very positive and our thanks go to Martin for his session. As it was very over-subscribed he has agreed to run it again on 18th January 2005. Visit the SEDA website for details.

SEDA Reading Group

At our committee meeting earlier in the year the observation was made as to how difficult we all find it to keep up with reading in the area. As a result, Shân Wareing agreed to set up a reading group which held its first informal meeting at the November conference.

The intention is to hold face to face meetings around four times a year, two of them at the Spring and Winter conferences, and the others at host institutions. Additional sessions will provide the opportunity for more regional meetings which involve little time and financial cost for those taking part.

If you are interested in being part of the group, please contact Shân at s.wareing@rhul.ac.uk. She would also welcome suggestions for further readings - the first is Etienne Wenger's Communities of Practice - as well as offers to host meetings.

Ranald Macdonald FSEDA
Chair, SEDA Research Committee

Ranald Macdonald is Head of Academic Development in the Learning and Teaching Institute at Sheffield Hallam University.

On from SCEDSIP: a brief history of SEDA

Trevor Habeshaw

(After the sad and untimely death of Richard Fothergill in a coach accident in Jordan, Trevor posted an obituary on the ISL web site, and we invited him to add a short account of the foundation of SCEDSIP, a predecessor to SEDA.)

Richard Fothergill

Richard Fothergill and his wife were killed in a bus crash while on tour in Jordan in late October.

Richard Fothergill was the prime mover and Director of the Council for Educational Technology (CET) 1980 -86 'Microelectronics Education Programme', the aim of which was to put at least one computer in every school in the country. The initial funding for this project was, I believe £3m over 3 years - regarded by many in those days as a ludicrously huge investment and ultimately by the Tories as too much for, after first extending the funding, they withdrew it in 1986. Richard's was the drive, and this was the pump-priming money, responsible for the rather distressing fact that now contemporary undergraduates know far more about computer - related stuff than do most of their teachers. It is good to remember him and thank him for that, for his ever-cheery demeanour and for his dreadful brown suits.

Prior to this project, he ran the largest and, he believed, the best Educational Development unit, PETRAS (Polytechnic Educational Research and Support), at Newcastle Polytechnic.
He was secretary (and together with its first Chairman, Derek 'Brains' Mortimer, the driving force) of the unlikely-named SCEDSIP organisation - the Standing Conference on Educational Development Services in Polytechnics - which was formed in 1974. Over the years, this organisation strengthened in a variety of ways (biannual conferences, publications, consultancies etc.) and changed its name to SCED (the Standing Conference on Educational Development), in 1987, during which time it was chaired by Joanna Tait and Mike O'Neil.

For the 20 years prior to this, SCEDSIP and SCED had worked to establish a dynamic and largely successful range of practical support services, new staff induction courses, training workshops and publications for staff in the public sector of higher education, (the polys) which were expanding very rapidly. Except for a few bright individuals in the 'real' universities, for example Lewis Elton (Surrey), Alan Harding (Bradford), John Cowan (Heriot Watt), Fred Bell (UMIST) and very few more, this work was largely seen as less important than the research and 'management' dimensions for HE educational development which was provided, in a minor key, by the annual SRHE Conference.

In 1978 Richard and I, as members of the Council of CET, discussed the issue of this unfortunate binary divide with Geoffrey Hubbard, then its excellent Director. His comment was "Well, hang on in there. The half-life of any educational innovation is about 25 years" - a statement which remains largely true today. Along with the rest of the committee, Richard worked hard to

address this split and by the end of his life I imagine he would have been delighted to see the progress that has been made.

SCEDSIP

SCEDSIP, the Standing Conference on Educational Development Services in Polytechnics, was established in 1974 in order to improve the effectiveness of educational development services within Polytechnics. It provided a much-needed forum where educational development unit (EDU) personnel within polytechnics and other institutions could meet and learn from each other. SCEDSIP quickly established links with the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics, CNAA and the DES and had regular meetings with them.

SCEDSIP emerged from a series of establishment meetings held at the Polytechnic of Central London (PCL) in 1973 and early 1974 under the adroit chairmanship of Derek Mortimer (head of the unit at PCL) and the energetic administration of Richard Fothergill. Other members of the original committee were Joyce Barlow (Brighton), Bill Chavner (Leeds), Anne Howe (Middlesex), Granville Morgan (Glamorgan), Stewart Trickey (Sheffield), and myself. This was a hard working and productive group, soon to be strengthened further by the recruitment of excellent people to various offices, both under the SCEDSIP title and that of its successor organization, of excellent people such as Diana Eastcott and Bob Farmer (Birmingham), Jessica Claridge (University of Exeter), Stephen Cox and Simon Horsman (Coventry), Graham Gibbs (Oxford Brookes), David Jaques (Institute of Education), Penny Kilibarda (Glamorgan), Mike O'Neil (Teesside), John Shepherd (CCAT), Joanna Tait (Brighton), and Celia Wills.

SCEDSIP strengthened and gathered momentum in its work and quickly established a Conference Committee with Joyce Barlow as chair which generated biannually an attractive and focused range of conferences, and a Publications Committee which produced Occasional Papers whose style (A4 monographs) and strength are evident from its offspring currently produced by SEDA. The first two '53' books on Lectures, and on Seminars and Tutorials started life in 1984 as SCEDSIP Occasional Papers 15 and 16 in November 1984, which gives an indication of the speed of production in those days.

SCEDSIP changed its name to the Standing Conference on Educational Development (SCED) in 1986 by way of recognising the attraction of this organisation for educational developers working in other areas of higher education - including an increasing representation from colleagues in established universities. All were welcomed as co-workers and contributed in various ways to the growing strength of the group. SCED morphed again into SEDA in 1993 when it was joined by the staff development group of SRHE.

Over the past 10 years SEDA has grown in both stature and range of activities: publications (such as The New Academic and Innovations in Education and Teaching International), and books published jointly with Kogan Page and now RoutledgeFalmer; Fellowships (offering qualification status to staff developers of all kinds); bi-annual conferences, and numerous short events and papers on a vast range of topics. Much of this was made possible by the efficient and unassuming administrative support of Jill Brookes' office, which coincided with energetic involvement and foresight of Sally Brown, followed by Carole and David Baume. It could be said that SEDA was in many ways the model (if not the inspiration!) for the Institute for Learning and Teaching and the Higher Education Academy.

Altogether an impressive record for an organization that is still run by its (voluntary) members and maintains a sense of shared values and community for all connected with it.

Some legacy!

Trevor Habeshaw is an educational developer, sheep farmer, chartered psychologist and publisher, who has recently joined a syndicate breeding Welsh cobs.

An Apology

Please note that in the last issue we gave incorrect information for Ruth Findlay-Brooks, who is in fact at the University of Hertfordshire.

Information on the ADEPTT Project can be found at: http://www.adeptt.ac.uk

53 Ways of Managing Resistance to Change

Steve Outram, The Higher Education Academy

In Educational Developments 5.2 the numerous ways in which colleagues might express their resistance to change were described and possible explanations for their resistance were introduced. The article suggested that sometimes resistance appears to be individual and sometimes it is clearly situational. Resistance may be passive; colleagues agree to a change but are unwilling or unable to implement something new. Sometimes resistance is active and there are many ways in which new ideas might be undermined or blocked. As developers, the ability to manage change is a fundamental element of our role yet, as the previous article outlined, there are many challenges that we face and there are many positions that we may adopt depending on the situation, the proposed change and the nature of the resistance to that change. So what can we do?

This is what we can do. Here are some simple suggestions drawn from a variety of perspectives. They are not intended to be exhaustive nor theoretically sophisticated. Rather, they are illustrative of many straightforward ideas that are described in the literature on managing change and working with resistance.

Establishing the preconditions for change

As Gus Pennington outlined in *Guidelines for Promoting and Facilitating Change,* there are a number of minimal preconditions that are necessary for a successful change initiative including being able to build a critical mass to support change. Also

Formal and informal strategies have to be developed for harnessing and managing individuals…Creating the preconditions in which change can occur is a key facilitation skill; *reducing individual resistance to change* through informal discussion and dialogue is as important as formal, public advocacy. *Increasing the pressure for change* is a less effective strategy to stimulate progress in HE departments/ organisations where power is diffuse and essentially sapiential rather than positional. (1)

Professor Pennington suggests the following minimal preconditions;

- the proposed changes must be seen as relevant to all affected
- there must be confidence that the changes will result in significant benefits
- the nature of the changes and their implications must be understood
- the values and rationale for the new situation must be compatible with those of the participants
- the change must be feasible

Similarly, in diagnosing the causes of resistance to change, Ken Hultman (2) suggests that there are eight principal reasons why people will support organisational change. With some overlap, he suggests people will support change when

- They believe their needs are not currently being met
- They believe the change will make it easier for them to meet their needs
- They believe the benefits outweigh the risks
- They believe the change is necessary to avoid or escape a harmful situation
- They believe the change process is being handled properly
- They believe the change will work
- The change is consistent with their values
- They trust those responsible for the change

Hultman invites us to undertake the difficult task of reflecting on our own willingness to change and asks us to question the facts, values and beliefs that we hold and whether they might inhibit or promote our own ability to accept change. He asks us to challenge the evidence we might have to substantiate our facts and beliefs and whether we are able to consider contrary evidence or beliefs without becoming defensive. Whilst no-one is a perfect change agent, he argues that we have to aspire to be impeccable role models for successful change to occur. The essential attributes of such a person include the ability to be a clear thinker who is able to take a rational 'helicopter view' of an organisational situation and reach logical conclusions. In creating the right environment for change to occur, Hultman suggests we might

- do things to establish a positive climate; that you are *'a fair and reasonable person who has their best interests at heart'*. (p172)
- attempt to create conditions that encourage an interest in improvement. This entails inculcating values related to development and improvement – values that echo the six SEDA values
- demonstrate how the change will improve your colleagues' circumstances in some way. If you have to implement a decision made by senior managers (such as a pro vice chancellor with responsibility for learning and teaching) which will have a detrimental effect on some colleagues, one has to be honest about it – or risk losing credibility
- demonstrate that there are opportunities in the change such as enabling colleagues to increase their knowledge and skills leading to genuine achievements
- involve people in decision-making so that the change belongs to them and not just to you

- Cultivate a value for collaborative working. When colleagues need each other to complete their activities it is easier to develop values of co-operation and mutuality. One of the ways in which colleagues have recognised and rewarded excellence in learning and teaching, for example, is through team awards. See *Recognising and Rewarding Excellent Teaching; Graham Gibbs and Trevor Habeshaw; National Co-ordination Team/ Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund; The Open University, 2002*

- Stay calm! At the heart of Hultman's analysis is a set of humanistic values coupled with an assumption that one cannot hope to influence another colleague without firstly demonstrating that they will have their needs met in some way. Getting impatient, exasperated and angry is likely to be counterproductive.

- Be careful to avoid inadvertent mistakes.

Trust

All the research literature suggests one of the fundamental elements of being a successful manager of change is trust. To be effective you need to be trustworthy. Hultman provides a very long list of actions that can lead to mistrust including;

- saying one thing but doing another
- say one thing to one person and something else to another
- gossiping about other people
- blaming others for mistakes
- competing with others
- giving more negative feedback than positive
- withholding information

Similarly, according to the literature, there are things that one can do to build and enhance trust, including

- Avoid actions contributing to mistrust (gossip/ blaming etc)
- Ensuring that understanding is shared
- Doing what you say you are going to do
- Looking for win-win outcomes
- Giving others credit where its due
- Take responsibility for mistakes
- Involve others in decisions affecting them
- Act out of integrity and not expediency
- Protecting the interests of those who aren't present
- Make the first move to create conditions for restoring trust if it has been lost
- Verify understanding – demonstrate that you really do understand other people's desires and concerns.

Just as one needs to be trusted so integrity is critical to promoting change successfully. Having the right preconditions and being a credible and trustworthy developer are necessary but not the whole story. The change management literature, often deriving from the USA, offers a number of practical steps. However, as educational developers and as academics, one needs to be wary of the often assertive, atheoretical and uncritical tone that can be found in this literature as well as that which derives from evidence-based research with a conceptual underpinning.

Being influential

For Laborde in *Influencing with Integrity,* there are a number of processes entailed in having influence.

- Firstly, being an effective influencer necessitates being outcome led. In this sense it is more than setting goals and objectives. As with constructive curriculum alignment, having influence means having specific outcomes with clear anticipated results. We must stay focused on an outcome and be precise in its description. For example, we might have a goal of improving the quality of student learning through learning and teaching projects. The very vagueness of this as a goal means that we are never sure whether we are being successful and it is easy to avoid taking seriously. To specify the ways in which a number of specific students will have an improved experience that is time-limited and measurable is to prepare a project that it is much more likely to be amenable to your influence!

- Secondly, Laborde insists that one must establish mutual benefit from activities, one must

  entertain the notion that everyone else involved gets his or her outcome, too.(page 20)

This entails 'dovetailing'. For example, one may be utterly certain that one knows the right thing to do in a situation; the right learning and teaching method, the most effective way of using virtual learning according to what is considered 'good practice' and so on. However, unless one can dovetail one's desired outcomes with those of the colleagues, any change is unlikely to endure.

- Thirdly, suggests Laborde, one must build rapport with those one seeks to influence. Rapport is the quintessential process for having influence and managing change. Rapport is built on the trust in one's colleagues and that they have in us. Without first establishing trust, rapport is not possible and without rapport, being influential is not possible.

Communication

Our own body language communicates volumes to those we are working with. Where we are uncertain ourselves of the need for change or what we have been asked to do, the uncertainty is likely to 'leak' - the literature is clear, when your body language and the words you use clash it is your body language that will have the greater impact. Similarly, the words one uses, the way one speaks and even the way one looks will have an impact on others. The use of language may also have a significant impact. From the considerable literature on language and

presentation skills a number of key guidelines can be constructed. These can be summarised as;

- The message from the literature that examines political persuasion is that talking positively, assertively and decisively is likely to be more influential
- This literature also suggests that one should avoid intensifiers such as 'definitely' and 'very'. Similarly, avoid hesitations, fillers, hedges and qualifiers – these have the effect of doing the opposite of what they are supposed to do. They communicate uncertainty and a lack of confidence, if not a lack of integrity. For example, when someone uses the phrase 'to be perfectly honest' it usually invites us to wonder about what else might have been going on!
- The advertising literature suggests one might emphasize the benefits of doing something, not the features. For example, the introduction of computer aided assessment will enable students to get substantially more formative feedback on their learning rather than allowing the tutor to create a databank of one thousand randomly organised multiple choice questions.
- Consider the emotional impact of the words that you use. Within the context of academic and educational development, for example, Shân Wareing has described the impact that the language of educational development might have on our colleagues. (4)
- Use credible evidence to illustrate points as much as possible – perhaps drawing on real cases that exemplify good practice or lessons learned.

In short, being influential is about seeking 'congruence' with those you would like to influence. As Laborde argues, that is the very opposite of being manipulative. To enter the world of influencing skills is, at times, to enter the world of the 'persuaders' and it is often difficult to keep integrity and still influence people. There are, though, a number of things one can do for oneself and one's team. This moves us away from *influencing skills* towards *leadership skills*. However, within the context of managing resistance to change one can

- Be a visible role model by how one acts and through what one does to demonstrably develop oneself.
- Make development a priority for one's team or department; something that is rewarded
- Continue to support the person one has influenced; what can one do to be an advocate for the new skills, knowledge and values they have gained? One will also need to help them track their progress; find opportunities to deploy new skills, knowledge and values; and celebrate their success? (5)
- Recruit champions for a project to ensure success
- Establish pockets of success to 'showcase' the value and benefits of change (6)
- Finally, As Phil Gravestock has argued within the context of dissemination, it is important not to give the impression that current practice is necessarily wrong, ineffective or outdated.

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